



Morgantown Police Department

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Enforcement of Laws Against Rioting

It is the responsibility of the Morgantown Police Department to protect the lives and property of those entrusted in its care. This includes all who live in, visit, and hold interest in the City of Morgantown. As such, it is the intent of the Morgantown Police Department to accomplish this responsibility through the enforcement of laws which protect the rights of all citizens. Should conditions exist such as those that existed in the Sunnyside and Downtown areas on the night of Saturday, October 6, 2012, the activities will be declared a riot and will be governed under West Virginia Law Chapter 61 Article 6. Under this section, law enforcement has the duty to "suppress riots, routs, and unlawful assemblages." Officers will "in the name of the law command them (rioters) to disperse; and if they shall not thereupon immediately and peaceably disperse," those present who fail to assist or obey "shall be deemed a rioter" and may be subject to arrest. The law states that officers "may take all actions which are necessary and reasonable under the emergency to restore law and order." "No person shall willfully fail to obey a lawful order of any mayor, sheriff, deputy sheriff, municipal police officer, member of the Department of Public Safety [West Virginia State Police], or other officer, given pursuant to this section." If anyone engaged in a riot destroys, in whole or in part, any dwelling or public building, they are guilty of a felony, and upon conviction, are subject to a jail term of 1 to 10 years. Other violations of this code may be classified as misdemeanors or felonies depending on the nature and severity of the crime and punishments vary accordingly.

The Morgantown Police Department is committed to its goal of eliminating crime in our city. Citizens are encouraged to become a **"Partner in Policing"**, by reporting suspected criminal activity to Morgantown Police Department Switchboard at (304) 284-7522. If you need immediate Police attention or a crime is in progress call 911.

Authority – Captain K.P. Clark